

KARACHI

Sunset 05:53pm
Sunrise (Tomorrow) 06:38am

NEXT 24 HRS

Minimum 21°C
Maximum 35°C
Humidity 31%
Outlook Partly Cloudy

METRO

South



Pacers, Saim star as Pakistan thrash SA to level T20 series

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(CLOCKWISE from top left) A group of street dancers from Congo; a member of American group 'Ballet Beyond Borders'; another member of the same group in a colourful costume, and, renowned sculptor Amin Gulgee perform at the Arts Council.—Fahim Siddiqi / Shakil Adil / White Star

World Culture Festival kicks off with dance, music and art performances

- CM Murad inaugurates second edition of mega show, which will continue till Dec 7
- Says Karachi remains the city where the world feels at home
- Artists from Nepal, Belgium, Syria, Congo, the US and Pakistan enthral audience at Arts Council on day one

By Peerzada Salman

KARACHI: Melodious songs, foot-tapping dances and an intriguing performance art piece were the highlights of the opening day of the second edition of the World Culture Festival (WCF) organised by the Arts Council of Pakistan on Friday.

As guests arrived to take part in the inaugural ceremony, they saw eminent sculptor Amin Gulgee and his team engaged in performance art in the open-air area outside the main auditorium. Their piece was called *The Game*. Then the invitees stepped into the main hall for formal proceedings.

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, who was the chief guest on the occasion, said the Arts Council has become the cultural heart not only of the city but of the entire nation.

“What began with the participation of 44 countries

[last year] has now remarkably evolved into a festival representing 142 nations and more than 1,000 artists. Karachi, unpredictable, vibrant, alive... has always embodied the soul of Pakistan. Today it welcomes the world. This festival celebrates art not only for its beauty, but for its power, the power to heal, connect and resist. In an age of ongoing conflicts and deepening polarisation, we gather here as dancers, poets, painters, musicians and filmmakers from every corner of the world, speaking one shared language: humanity,” he said.

The chief minister said in the province of Sindh, culture is not merely a policy; it is a legacy. The poetry of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai echoes in shrines and streets. “The rhythms of Sufi *dhol* and kafi continue to beat in the hearts of our people. We do not simply support culture, we live it.”

He thanked all guests who have travelled from their countries to participate in the event. “Karachi remains the city where the world feels at home.”

Earlier in his welcome address, Arts Council President Ahmed Shah profusely thanked all those who have helped him put up the event. Pointing out the importance of the artist community, he said artists raise their voice against genocide.

“In the last two years, the biggest genocide of the 21st century took place in Gaza. All over the world, even those countries who support Israel, their people raised their voice against genocide. It was the artists whose voice was the loudest. I was worried, how can I arrange the largest festival when there’s a genocide happening in Gaza. Thank God, with the support of the international community, there’s a temporary ceasefire. We can celebrate that ceasefire,” he said.

“The other thing is global connectivity and diplo-

macy through culture. Culture unites people. There’s a travel advisory from the US, but American artists are sitting here in the auditorium,” he added.

The speeches were followed by some brilliant performances. Shah Ja Faqir warmed everyone’s hearts by presenting sur Marvi in their soul-stirring style.

Madan Gopal from Nepal sang a lovely song about his country in which he included the word Karachi.

Lucy Tasker from Belgium displayed her skills as an instrumentalist. She masterfully played the bass clarinet. It was an improvisational piece.

Ammar Ashkar from Syria appeared on stage with the *dholak* player Irfan Ali. He mixed his Arabic folk tune with a touch of Sindhi folk. It was a delightful combination.

Arguably, the highlight of the show was Akbar Khamisu Khan’s performance on the *alghoza*. He played a composition that made the audience, which had packed the hall in the blink of an eye, clap to his track joyously.

France’s Zakaria Haffar added a different colour to the stage with his delicate playing of the *santoor*. He, too, was very good.

The shift from purely musical to the purely rhythmic changed when Congo’s street dancers entertained the guests with their youthful and energetic act. The younger lot in the audience especially liked their dance.

Another dance act followed with the American group, Ballet Beyond Borders. They presented two solo pieces: fancy war dance and contradiction. Both were expertly done.

Bangladesh’s Shireen Jawad also did a commendable job with her singing.

The festival will continue till Dec 7.

Notices issued on plea against ‘period tax’

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Friday issued notices to the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and other respondents on a petition challenging the sales tax on women’s sanitary napkins.

A two-judge bench headed by Justice Adnan Iqbal Chaudhry also put the attorney general on notice for a date to be fixed after two weeks.

Alisha Shabbir, a resident of Karachi, moved the SHC against what it commonly called as the ‘period tax’, citing the FBR, Ministry of Law & Justice, Excise & Taxation Department of Sindh, provincial health secretary and others as respondents,

Her counsel submitted that around 40pct of the retail price of a sanitary napkin in the country came from government taxes and duties on raw materials instead of the actual cost of production.

The lawyer stated that such a heavy tax burden has made the hygiene products unaffordable for millions of women and girls, despite their being a hygiene necessity.

He argued that sanitary napkins must be classified as essential items just like other necessities of life and accordingly included in the Sixth Schedule of the Sales Tax Act, 1990, to exempt them from sales tax and that their raw materials may also be

placed under the Eighth Schedule so that the benefit could actually reach consumers.

The counsel maintained that the impugned classification and taxation of sanitary napkins as non-essential items, thereby subjecting them to a higher rate of sales tax and also constituted an egregious violation of the fundamental rights guaranteed under Articles 9 and 14 of the Constitution.

After a preliminary, the bench in its order said, “Issue notice to the respondents and the Attorney General for Pakistan under Order XXVII-A CPC for a date to be fixed by the office after two [02] weeks.”

—By Ishaq Tanoli

Another tremor felt in Karachi

KARACHI: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) recorded a low-intensity tremor in Karachi on Friday afternoon.

According to the PMD’s data, the earthquake of 2.2-magnitude occurred at 3.39pm, with its epicentre located 24 kilometres north of DHA City, at a depth of 10km. Speaking to Dawn, Chief Meteorologist Ameer Hyder Laghari, also a senior seismologist, said that the seismic activity was caused by the (active) fault passing close to the Thana Bola Khan.

“It’s the second low-intensity tremor generated by this fault line this month. The first one was recorded early this month (October),” he said, adding that over 10 tremors had been recorded in two days in the Gilgit-Baltistan region.—Staff Reporter

Deadline for new number plates extended for two months

Dawn Report

KARACHI: The Sindh government has extended the deadline to replace old number plates of vehicles with new Ajrak-themed plates by two more months.

According to a notification issued on Friday, the excise and taxation department “is pleased to extend the timeline for replacement of existing number plates with new security-featured number plates to 31st December, 2025 instead of 31st October, 2025 (in respect of all types of vehicles).

Earlier in August, the Sindh government had extended the deadline for citizens to obtain new number plates featuring the Ajrak design until Oct 31, following instructions from Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari.

MDCAT results announced

SUKKUR: The SIBA Testing Services (STS) on Friday announced the provisional results of the Medical and Dental Colleges Admission Test (MDCAT) 2025.

The test was conducted on Oct 26 in Karachi, Hyderabad, Jamshoro, Mirpurkhas, Shaheed Benazirabad, Larkana, Jacobabad, Sukkur and the federal capital.

The provisional results, along with the list of qualified candidates based on the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council’s (PMDC) minimum passing criteria of 55 per cent for medical college admission and 50 per cent for dental college admission, is posted on the STS website, <https://www.iba-suk.edu.pk/sts/announcements>.

The candidates may forward any complaint by emailing sts@iba-suk.edu.pk with the subject line “Result Grievances-MDCAT-2025” by Saturday, 5:00pm. STS will verify and respond to valid queries via email.—APP

Ruckus as City Council members reject heavy traffic fines

- In a resolution, members ask Sindh govt to repair streets and roads first
- Call for using city cameras to catch criminals
- PPP adopts resolution to name Karimabad underpass after Dr Asim Hussain

By Tahir Siddiqui

KARACHI: The City Council on Friday exploded with ruckus over a resolution against the implementation of new traffic-violation fines as high as Rs50,000 through e-challan system.

The resolution expressed strong reservations over heavy fines imposed through

e-challan for traffic rule violations in Karachi and demanded that the Sindh government withdraw the notification.

Although the ruling Pakistan Peoples Party members, who spoke on the resolution, tried to justify the government decision of increase, their colleagues joined hands with the opposition local government public representatives of Jamaat-i-Islami and Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf.

The two opposition party members also held separate protest demonstrations in and outside the KMC Head Office Building, chanting slogans against the implementation of e-challan in the metropolis.

Opposition Leader Advocate Saifuddin, who tabled the resolution against the new e-challan system, slammed the provincial government for jacking up the traffic-violation fines.

The resolution expressed grave concerns over the Sindh government’s decision of raising traffic-violation fines in the metropolis. It said that the streets and major roads in the city, either under the administrative control

of the KMC or towns, were in dilapidated conditions and there were no traffic signs or directions for speed limits and other traffic rules.

The City Council members through the resolution demanded of the provincial government to immediately withdraw the notification of the enhanced traffic-violation fines.

The resolution demanded that the e-challan be issued only as warning to the traffic laws violators. It also demanded that traffic police be deputed to regulate traffic and train road users instead of harassing them.

The resolution said that the streets and roads be repaired so people were not compelled to adopt an otherwise wrong way. It also demanded that the cameras installed in the city be used to contain crime.

Rejecting the provincial government’s decision, PTI’s Saad Khan jibed that the roads in the city were “like in Afghanistan”, while the challans were “like in Azerbaijan”.

JI member Junaid Mukati asked why



THE City Council session is underway at KMC head office.—INP

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